

The Advisor

New weapons for the Iraqi Army



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The faces of Iraqi soldiers and police have been altered to protect their identities.

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ON THE COVER

An Iraqi soldier hands another an M-16 rifle magazine during live-fire training at Taji military base. In the next year, the Iraqi military hopes to train all soldiers on either the M-16 or the M-4 carbine.

Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner

Anbar province still dangerous but getting better, leaders say

By Gerry J. Gilmore

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Life in Iraq's Anbar province is still dangerous, but security is improving, the senior commander for ground operations in the province said in Baghdad May 14.

For example, 22 joint security stations in the town of Ramadi now are helping to tamp down violence, U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus, ground forces commander for Multi-National Force - West, said during a news conference.

"As security continues to improve, we don't think that there will be a need for all of those security stations," stated Gurganus, whose jurisdiction includes Anbar province.

Much success has been achieved in reducing violence in Anbar province, Gurganus said, although he acknowledged that conditions there can still be precarious for residents as well as for Iraqi and Coalition forces.

"We clearly see that the Iraqi citizens have grown tired of what the insurgency has to offer."

U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus, ground forces commander for Multi-National Force - West

"There are still dangerous things going on there," the one-star general said. "While we have achieved a great deal of success, there still are dangers."

Gurganus cited Anbar residents' growing disapproval of and hostility toward al-Qaida and other terrorists as an indicator of an improving climate across the western province.

"We clearly see that the Iraqi citizens have grown tired of what the insurgency has to offer; they do not want any part of



U.S. Marine Brig. Gen. Charles M. Gurganus is the ground forces commander for Multi-National Force - West.

it," Gurganus said. Iraqis living in Anbar province want a cessation of violence, he noted, and a secure future for themselves and their families. Iraqi citizens in Anbar are increasingly providing information about insurgent operations to Iraqi Security Forces, he said.

A second indicator of success in Anbar is illustrated by the brave Iraqi Security Forces that serve across the province, Gurganus said. Although challenged by danger, ISF in Anbar province "come back to work" each day, he said.

"They know that they are the solution for the future," Gurganus said of the security forces.

There'll be additional success against insurgents operating in Anbar, Gurganus predicted, noting Coalition forces now enjoy a "full partnership" with ISF serving across the province.

Also, recruitment for ISF is up across Anbar, Gurganus said.

"Now, the sons of al Anbar have stood up and are stepping forward to join the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police," he said.

Iraqi Army receives improved weaponry

**By U.S. Air Force
Senior Airman Christie Putz
MNSTC-I Public Affairs**

TAJI, Iraq — The Iraqi Army started what is expected to be the year-long process of training and equipping their entire force with traditional U.S. military weapons at Taji military base this month.

“There is a lot changing in our military now,” said Nizar, an Iraqi soldier going through the course, who requested his real name not be used. “These new weapons are just one thing that is going to make us stronger.”

Previously AK-47 toting soldiers are now armed with either an M-16 rifle or M-4 carbine during the five-day course.

On the first day, soldiers turn in their AK-47s for their new weapons. The M-16s are issued to the jundi, or Iraqi Army non-commissioned officers, while the M-4s are primarily reserved for the officer corps.

The issuing process takes them through a line of identification verification and recording of their weapon’s serial number for individual accountability, a new process for the Iraqi military.

“Before we were just handed AK-47s,” said Nizar. “Now that each person has only one weapon for themselves and not anyone else, I think everyone will be more careful.”

Being careful includes keeping the weapons out of the hands of insurgents, he said.

A photograph is taken of the soldier with his weapon, showing the serial number. Biometrics, such as a printing of the soldier’s palm and fingers as well as an eye retinal scan, are also recorded.

This information is collected and centrally located in a database at the Ministry of Defense in Baghdad, Iraq.

Day two of training covers primary rifle instruction. Soldiers learn how to

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A Jundi loads rounds into an M-16 magazine between chances on Taji Regional Training Center’s firing line.



One challenge for IA soldiers is the adjustment between the sighting systems of the old AK-47 assault rifle and the American made M-16.



An Iraqi soldier lines up his shot on one of the two live fire days during the five-day course preparing them for use of their new M-16 rifles or M-4

Photos by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner



Junoud gather around as Coalition advisors instruct them on the use of their new weapons.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner

Junoud face their targets at the Taji Regional Training Center firing range during the M-16 and M-4 instruction course.

Five-day course trains Iraqi soldiers for use of traditional U.S. weapons

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assemble and disassemble their weapons, how to overcome malfunctions and learn the basic fundamentals of firing the weapons.

The first time the soldiers fire their weapons is on day three of instruction. This day is dedicated to zeroing their sights and grouping their shots. The minimum for qualification is 21 out of 40 shots, which many soldiers score on this day.

"They have done really well with qualifying on the live fire," said Lt. Col. Walter Easter, senior Coalition advisor for the Taji Regional Training Center. "The M-4 and M-16s are much easier to shoot than what they are used to, and it's just a better weapon system."

Day four is another qualifying day for those who did not get to fire, or a chance to refire for those who did not qualify.

In the second group to complete the training, 55 percent of the soldiers qualified on their weapons during the first day of shooting. After the second day, the number surpassed the overall goal of 70 percent qualification for groups exiting the course.

"We're very pleased with the results thus far," said Easter. "The desire on the part of the Iraqis to learn this weapon is phenomenal."

On the final day of training, units draw their ammunition to take back into the field and leave Taji. On this same day, another company is starting with the issuing of their new weapons.

Originally, the training was four days long. However, after the first class fell short of achieving marksmanship qualification, an additional day was incorporated as a chance for soldiers to refire their weapons.

One company of roughly 200 people are trained at Taji at one time. To allow closer instruction from beginning to end, the company is broken down into smaller groups of approximately 50.

Another training location is scheduled to open at Besmaya Range July 1, said Easter. Full battalions of approximately 800-900 soldiers will be able to train there simultaneously.

With both of these sites open, he expects it will take a little more than a year to train the entire Iraqi Army. As they near that mark, the instruction will also be folded into the basic combat training course, he added, and the newest soldiers to enter the ranks will also be armed with the new weapons.



An Iraqi soldier watches as his target is scored by a U.S. contractor who is instructing the course.

HEALTH CARE REFORM: Clinics transition to Iraqi authority

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class
Kimberly A. Green
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – What a difference a few years make. With 15 new facilities in Iraq, nearly 7,000 medical staff members and countless amounts of dollars spent – they all have had an enormous impact on the reform of Iraq's health care since the fall of Saddam in 2003.

"Iraq's military medical system is not equal to its U.S. counterpart, but is improving on a daily basis," said Brig. Gen. Samir, surgeon general for the Iraqi Ministry of Defense.

To date, Iraqi clinical personnel have taken total responsibility of several of their health care facilities throughout Iraq. They now have total responsibility for the provision of adequate care and full operation of 13 clinics.

According to U.S. Navy Lt. Rodney Wilson, operations officer MNSTC-I, Health Affairs, the Iraqis are ready for these handoffs.

"I have accessed these clinics and their staff and they are eager to assume responsibility. They are ready to take the helm," he said. "They are fully capable of providing the most appropriate levels



An Iraqi dental technician at the Umm Qasr facility in the southern part of Iraq is evaluated by U.S. Navy Lt. Rodney Wilson, operations officer, MNSTC-I Health Affairs.



Photos courtesy of MNSTC-I Health Affairs

An Iraqi health care professional prepares to treat an injured Jundi, under the watchful eye of a Coalition advisor at the An Numaniyah clinic. Iraqi clinical personnel have total responsibility for the provision of adequate care and operation of 13 clinics around the country.

of care."

With only a couple of clinics left to transition, most of the Iraqi health care professionals are already running the show.

"Our clinic is Iraqi led with Coalition members as advisors. We are doing everything by ourselves now," said Iraqi Army Lt. Col. Maitham, An Numaniyah clinic commander.

"We now have what we need to help care for our people...our soldiers," he added.

Samir noted that in times of war, health care is very important to the overall success on the battlefield.

"People only think of bullets, tanks and airplanes when it comes to war. They don't think of the medical team that maintains a healthy fighting force," declares Samir. "We will keep our

"People only think of bullets, tanks and airplanes when it comes to war. They don't think of the medical team that maintains a healthy fighting force... We will keep our soldiers ready for combat."

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Samir, surgeon general for the Iraqi Ministry of Defense

soldiers ready for combat."

To add to their growing health care capabilities Samir and the MOD staff along with Coalition advisors, recently unveiled the Surgeon General's Trauma Simulation Lab in Baghdad.



No man left behind

IRAQ — Iraqi Special Operations Forces and Coalition forces conduct a search and rescue mission, May 13, in an attempt to find soldiers missing in action.

Photos by U.S. Navy MC1 Michael B.W. Watkins

ISF show mettle under fire, U.S. says

Multiple terrorist attacks in Mosul met with force

By Multi-National Corps – Iraq
Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

MOSUL, Iraq — Iraqi Security Forces demonstrated bravery and quick reactions under fire while repelling a large-scale terrorist attack, May 16, in Mosul, according to U.S. Army officials.

“This was a total team effort on the part of the Iraqi leadership, the ISF and emergency responders,” said U.S. Army Col. Stephen Twitty, commander, 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. “This Iraqi team showed the people of Mosul that they are resolute in their efforts to defeat this very cowardly, desperate enemy while protecting innocent civilians.”

The first attack consisted of three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices targeting the Badush Bridge northwest of the city at 5:15 p.m., followed by another VBIED attack at 5:45 p.m. on the Aski-Mosul Bridge, further west of the city. Two more VBIEDs exploded outside a police station and the transition jail. The first VBIED was a dump truck, which detonated upon reaching the entrance to the station.

The driver of the second VBIED attempted to enter the compound but the ISF killed him, preventing the terrorists from hitting their intended target. At the same time, small-arms fire broke out as the terrorists attempted to breach the jail and release prisoners. Again, the ISF were able to turn back the attackers and keep the facility secure.

The driver of the dump truck VBIED parked outside a southeast police station just after 7 p.m. abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot. He was killed while fleeing the area. Iraqi police immediately cordoned off the vicinity before detonation. No casualties resulted.

Small-arms fire also erupted at five police stations throughout the city and at one combat outpost. Two more stations received indirect fire. In all cases, the Iraqi Army and police were able to repel the enemy, killing at least 15 terrorists and turning back

the remaining anti-Iraq forces.

Iraqi Police Chief, Gen. Wathiq, imposed a citywide, no-movement curfew and announced bridge closings in the city of Mosul. Iraqi Police and the Provincial Joint Communications Center coordinated recovery and casualty evacuation. Firefighters and several ambulances responded to the incident to help treat casualties and transport them to local hospitals.

“The ISF are in the lead and they are certainly a capable force,” said Twitty. “Their quick reactions to yesterday’s attacks only serve to prove their ability to destroy and remove terrorists. Their actions demonstrate their commitment to this city and its people. I am extremely proud to serve beside them.”

“There are two things that these events make perfectly clear: The ISF and local leaders are committed to this city and the welfare of the people, and second, the terrorists are cowards.”

**U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon ,
commanding general of Multi-National
Division - North and Task Force Lighting**

Attacks using small-arms fire and mortars continued through the night targeting the ISF and a nearby Coalition forces base, but most were sporadic, isolated events following the VBIEDs earlier in the evening.

The next morning, Iraqi Police discovered three vehicles with numerous weapons and detained 30 suspects. The Iraqi Army and police continued to sweep the area, while local leaders restricted movement around key infrastructure.

“There are two things that these events make perfectly clear: The ISF and local leaders are committed to this city and the welfare of the people, and second, the terrorists are cowards -- a band of desperate criminals who will commit any heinous act in order to disrupt the people’s right to life and liberty,” said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, commanding general, Multi-National Division - North and Task Force Lighting.

Torture house found

An Iraqi Army soldier inventories items found during a search operation in Baghdad’s Mansour District May 16. Iraqi Army troops teamed up with Coalition forces to uncover the weapons cache and a suspected torture house, used for interrogating kidnap victims.



Photos by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Patrick Henson



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Bennie Corbett

Keeping the streets safe

Iraqi Army soldiers search a house for weapons and insurgents during a cordon and search mission in Al Risalah, Iraq, May 8.

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Army, EOD prevent car bomb tragedy

BAGHDAD – Iraqi soldiers and an Iraqi Army explosive ordnance disposal team stopped extremists from detonating a car bomb in Bayaa, a southern neighborhood in Baghdad, May 16.

Acting on a report about a suspicious vehicle, Iraqi troops cordoned off the area and took precautions to secure residents before calling in EOD for support.

The explosive was identified and diffused before it could be used in an attack.

- Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs

Rashid clearing continues: Combined force seizes caches, detains insurgents

BAGHDAD – Iraqi and Coalition forces, continued clearing operations in southwestern Baghdad neighborhoods, May 14, and 15. Suspects believed to be involved in anti-coalition activities were detained and caches containing explosively-formed projectiles, artillery and mortar shells, weapons and other bomb-making materials were seized.

Iraqi soldiers found six EFP arrays, as well as multiple caches of weapons and munitions in two houses located in the Amel neighborhood.

In addition, 82mm mortar rounds, rockets, rocket-propelled grenade warheads and an anti-tank missile were found and

disposed of by explosive ordnance disposal teams.

Iraqi forces arrested two individuals at the residence where one cache was found, and turned them over to the Iraqi National Police for questioning. The cache included 75 57mm anti-aircraft rounds and more than 50 pounds of explosives. The munitions and explosives were confiscated and disposed of by EOD.

Five other caches found consisted of numerous AK-47 assault rifles, several machine guns and sniper rifles, small arms ammunition, assorted artillery and mortar shells and other bomb-making materials.

- Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs

IA leads security operation in Basrah

BASRAH – A major security operation led by the Iraqi Army was launched in Basrah May 13.

Acting on information received during the initial part of the operation, a follow-up search was conducted. Iraqi forces arrested six individuals and uncovered a significant arms cache in the Hay Al Mudhara district.

The cache consisted of weapons and munitions, including components used in making EFP roadside bombs, explosives, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenades and a significant quantity of intelligence and rogue militia propaganda material were also successfully recovered.

- Multi-National Division (South East) – Iraq PAO

IRAQI SECURITY FORCES / in brief

Iraqi Army leads Operation Mongoose

KALSU – Iraqi Army soldiers and Coalition forces conducted an operation south of Diyarrah, May 13, to capture suspected insurgents responsible for emplacing improvised explosive devices and conducting indirect fire attacks.

As a result of the Iraqi-led operation, 25 suspected terrorists wanted by the Iraqi Army were detained.

In addition to the detainees, the soldiers also found three 120mm mortar rounds and various IED-making materials.

The suspected terrorists are being held by the Iraqi Army for further questioning.

- Multi-National Division – Center PAO

Iraqi Special Operations Forces detain suspected terrorist leader in Basrah

BASRAH – Iraqi Special Operations Forces detained the suspected leader of an alleged terrorist cell during an early morning raid in Basrah May 13.

The targeted individual is alleged to be the leader of a rogue element of the Jaysh al-Mahdi and said to be involved in extensive improvised explosive device attacks in the Basrah area. ISOF also detained five other suspicious individuals.

ISOF raided a second location and seized a large cache of weapons and other materials.

One Iraqi soldier suffered non-life threatening injuries. No

Coalition forces were injured during the operation.

- Multi-National Corps – Iraq PAO

Iraqi SOF detain suspects allegedly responsible for EFP attacks

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Special Operations Forces conducted an early-morning operation south of Baghdad May 12.

Iraqi forces raided a residence in the Hillah area south of Baghdad and captured two suspects believed to be responsible for an EFP attack earlier in the week.

No Iraqi or Coalition forces were injured during this operation.

-Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs

Iraqi Special Forces capture 3 suspects involved in death squad, Coalition attacks

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Special Operations Forces captured the alleged leader of a rogue element of the Jaysh al-Madhi militia in the Alamel area of Baghdad May 11.

The ISOF also detained two other high level individuals as well as seven other persons suspected of suspicious activities.

The alleged leader is also suspected of taking part in the burning of a civilian house.

No Iraqi or Coalition forces were injured during these operations.

- Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs

Crawling before running

Iraqi police practice low crawling during training to become Iraqi special weapons and tactics personnel in Kalsu, Iraq, May 4.



Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Timothy Stephens